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Location Plan for Askernish Golf Club South Uist, Outer Hebrides Scotland





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Update on Progress at Askernish, South Uist, Outer Hebrides May 2007

Ralph Thompson's excellent masterminding of the restoration of an 18 hole course on the site of Old Tom Morris's 1891 layout at Askernish has led to the project progressing as follows.

Full planning permission for the initial course layout has now been granted. This means that grass can be cut and the area maintained as a golf course.

However, winter storms highlighted the problem of sand blow onto some of the northern holes of the original layout. This led to Gordon Irvine and Ralph making a slight shift in the focus of the land for the course to the south which is actually an advantage as the southern land is more dramatic in terms of the dune structure.



The view from the 7th tee – There is evidence of the sand blow here but the hole is critical to the layout and the grass grows through the sand very quickly in the spring



The classic short par 4 8th hole remains in the layout – The view from the tee

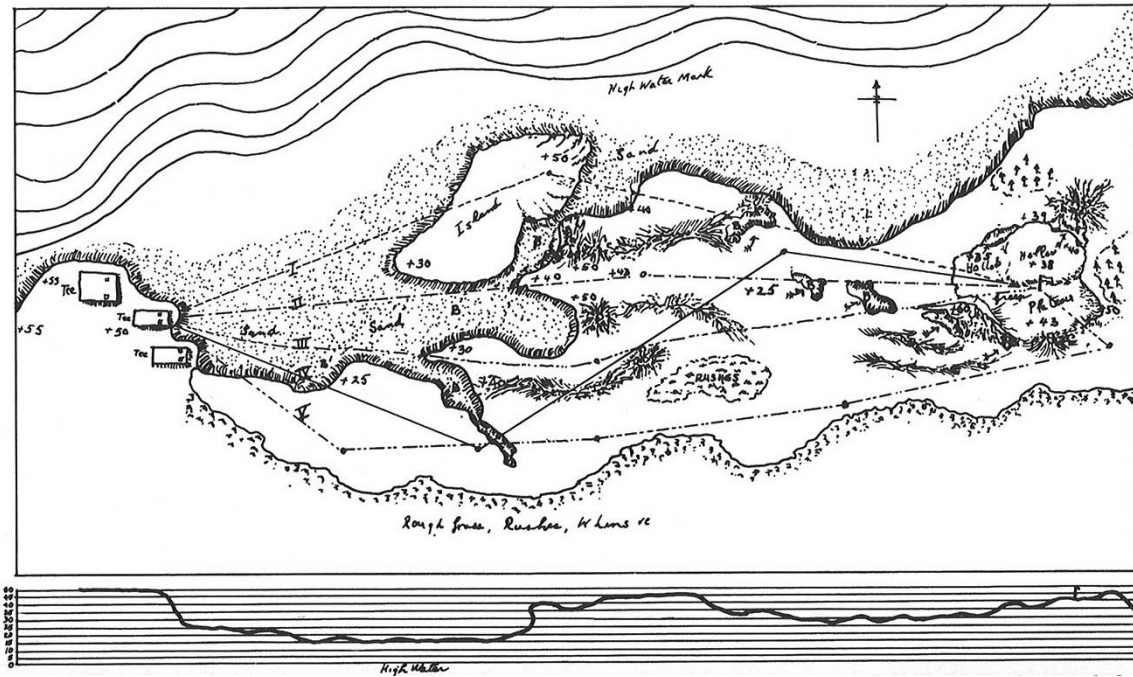
The excellent adjustments which Gordon and Ralph made, which were refined slightly during a visit in early May, have resulted in three completely new holes to the south and the reorientation of the classic par 3 14th hole (from the original layout). This is actually improved as it now has the ocean as its backdrop beyond the dunes.

The green

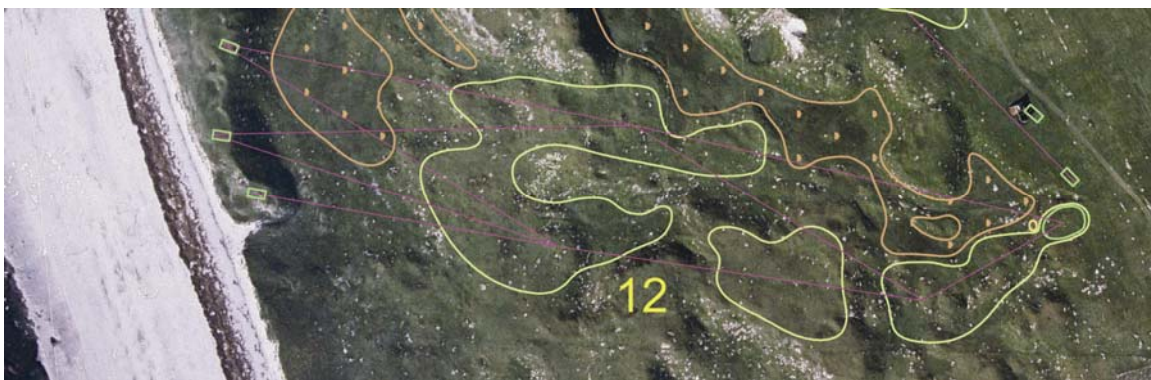


The 14th played from the new direction

The three completely new holes are amongst the most exciting with the 12th bringing to mind Dr. Alister Mackenzie's winning entry for the Ideal Golf Hole in Country Life. There will be numerous ways of playing the hole with wet dune slacks, wonderful dunes and blind shots all playing their part in providing the different options.

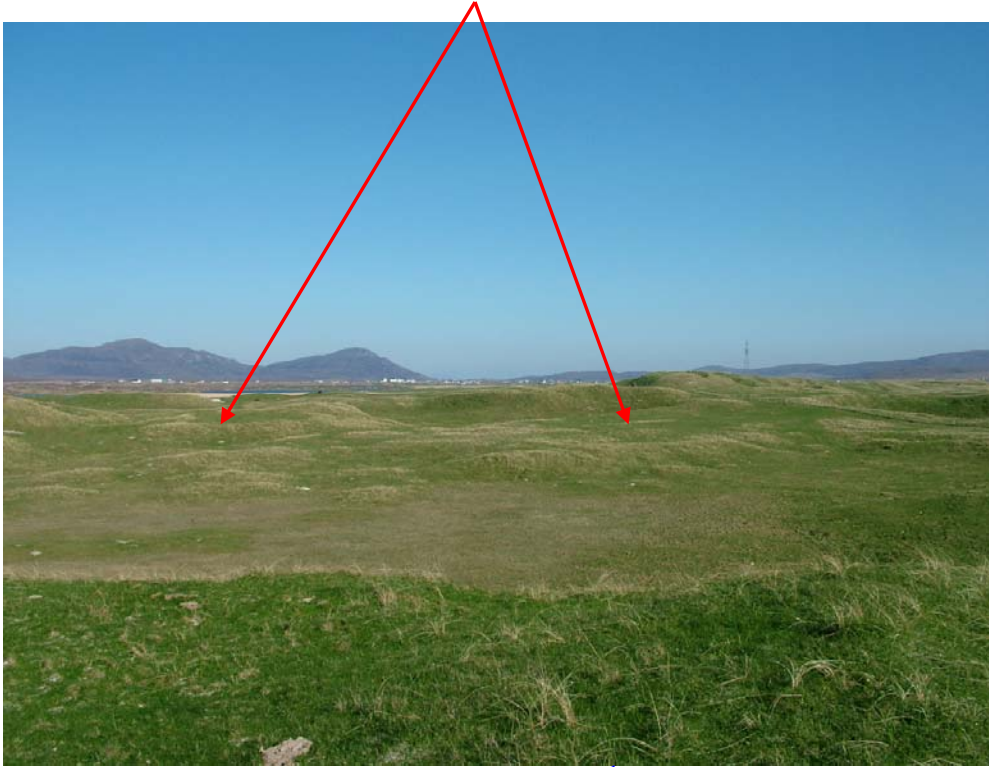


Dr. Alister Mackenzie's Ideal Golf Hole



The multiple route 12th hole at Askernish

The two landing areas for the tee shot



The view from the 12th tee

The 12th green protected by the bunker formed by the cattle



The 11th hole is a new par 3 which involves a heroic carry over a valley between the dunes. Into a reasonably strong wind this will be a formidable test for anyone but a huge green awaits lying right next to the cliff edge by the beach.



The 11th tee shot played across the chasm of the valley between the dunes



The 11th green site

The 13th is a short par 4 playing around a huge dune with a green set beside a natural crater with a steep drop away at the rear.

The 14th green

The 13th green with the steep drop to its rear



By moving three holes to the south it will be necessary to reapply for planning permission for the new layout but it is hoped that this should not be at all contentious bearing in mind that the principle of the recreation of 18 holes has been approved and the land to the south is grazed less during the winter months.

There remain some issues to agree with some of the local crofters but talks are about to begin.

Financially the R&A have provided a grant and there will be a relationship between a new course called Goodwood to the north of Toronto, the construction of which Mackenzie & Ebert has been overseeing. This has been designed to be a British style course and the arrangement will see Goodwood members becoming reciprocal members of Askernish.

On the construction front, Gordon Irvine, along with the Course Manager, Colin MacGregor and his assistants Alan and Nollie, have been doing sterling work forming a number of small tees to allow play from level lies. Two greens have been reshaped, one in a hollow (the 15th) and the other on an existing ridge (the 7th).

Now that permission has been achieved, mowing out of the other greens will commence and marram fringed bunkers can be cut out with the sand used for top dressing of the greens.



The lightly graded 15th green in the hollow

Construction has started on a small clubhouse but a public body has pulled out of a commitment to help with the funding of this so any potential sources of funds would be most welcome.

The news about the course seems to be spreading far and wide with growing excitement. It will be an ideal venue to play with hickory clubs, which seem to be in vogue once more. Malcolm Peake is coordinating a good deal of publicity regarding the project.

The project really will present a course which is a Living Golf Course Museum. The creation of the course is so similar to the way that the first courses evolved. Golfers just playing the land as it lies and the greenkeepers gradually refining conditions as the course becomes well known and more popular. Rudimentary putting surfaces to begin with but

gradually an improvement of the surfaces by minor levelling and conditioning. No irrigation to begin with. Tiny tees which will, over time, need to be made larger. Bunkers formed by the cattle and where the golfers' divots will wear the grass away. Golf as is used to be.



The bunker formed by the cattle at the 12th hole

All being well, the plan is for the course to be opened on 24th May of 2008 which is the anniversary of the death of Old Tom Morris.

For any further details please contact Ralph Thompson at:-

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NB The report of the original visit made by Martin Ebert to Askernish in March 2006 can be downloaded from the Mackenzie & Ebert web site at:-

www.mackenzieandebert.co.uk

*18 Hole Course Layout at the Home of the Old Tom Morris Golf Course
Askernish Golf Club, South Vist, Outer Hebrides, Scotland*

Original Layout Designed in 1891

